

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automated method for removing a fluid substance from a sealed collection device comprising a cap fitted onto an open-end of a fluid-holding vessel, [[and a cap,]] the method comprising the following ordered steps [[of]]:
 - a) puncturing [[a surface of]] the cap with a fluid transfer device;
 - b) pausing movement of the fluid transfer device prior to contacting a fluid substance contained in the vessel so that air can be vented from the collection device;
 - c) ~~continuing movement of the fluid transfer device after step b) until the fluid transfer device contacts~~ contacting the fluid substance [[contained in the vessel]] with the fluid transfer device;
 - d) drawing at least a portion of the fluid substance into the fluid transfer device; and
 - e) removing the fluid transfer device from the collection device.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the fluid substance is obtained from a biological fluid selected from the group consisting of blood, urine, saliva, sputum, mucous or other bodily secretion, pus, amniotic fluid, cerebrospinal fluid and seminal fluid.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the fluid transfer device is a plastic pipette tip.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the pipette tip includes one or more ribs extending outwardly from an outer surface thereof, and wherein at least one of the ribs contacts [[the]] a surface of the cap during step a).

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the pipette tip includes one or more grooves recessed from an outer surface thereof, and wherein at least one air passageway is formed between at least one of the grooves and ~~[[the]]~~ a surface of the cap during step a).

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein, prior to step a), a lubricant is applied to at least a portion of the pipette tip or ~~[[the]]~~ to a surface of the cap ~~[[prior to]]~~ punctured during step a).

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the cap includes one or more radially extending ribs, ~~[[positioned on the surface of the cap]]~~ and wherein at least one of the ribs contacts the fluid transfer device during step a).

8. Canceled

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the movement of the fluid transfer device is paused for at least about 0.5 seconds during step b).

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising withdrawing the fluid transfer device from ~~[[the punctured surface of]]~~ the cap between steps a) and c).

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the movement of the fluid transfer device is paused for at least about 0.5 seconds during step b).

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the speed of the fluid transfer device during step c) is greater than the speed of the fluid transfer device during step a).

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising withdrawing the fluid transfer device from [[the punctured surface of]] the cap between steps a) and c).

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the movement of the fluid transfer device is paused for at least about 0.5 seconds during step b).

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising withdrawing the fluid transfer device from [[the punctured surface of]] the cap between steps a) and c).

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein [[the surface of]] the cap [[punctured in step a) is]] comprises a molded plastic [[molded in the form of]] having a generally conical inner wall, and wherein the inner wall is punctured by the fluid transfer device during step a).

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the inner wall includes a plurality of radially extending striations.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the cap contains a wick for limiting the release of an aerosol from the vessel during [[the penetrating]] step a).

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the wick is selected from the group consisting of pile fabrics, sponges, foams, felts, sliver knits, and spandex.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising penetrating a seal affixed to the cap with the fluid transfer device, wherein the seal maintains the wick within the cap.

21. (Currently Amended) An automated method for removing a fluid substance from a sealed collection device comprising a cap fitted onto an open end of a fluid-holding vessel, ~~[[and a cap,]]~~ the method comprising the following ordered steps ~~[[of]]~~:

~~a) contacting a surface of the cap with a fluid transfer device moving at a first speed;~~
[[b)]] a) puncturing ~~[[the surface of]]~~ the cap with ~~[[the]]~~ a fluid transfer device moving at a first speed;

[[c)]] b) ~~[[entering the collection device with]]~~ increasing the speed of the fluid transfer device ~~[[moving at]]~~ to a second speed~~[[, wherein the second speed is greater than the first speed]]~~ as it enters the collection device;

[[d)]] c) contacting the fluid substance with the fluid transfer device;

[[e)]] d) drawing at least a portion of the fluid substance into the fluid transfer device;

and

[[f)]] e) removing the fluid transfer device from the collection device.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the fluid substance is obtained from a biological fluid selected from the group consisting of blood, urine, saliva, sputum, mucous or other bodily secretion, pus, amniotic fluid, cerebrospinal fluid and seminal fluid.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the fluid transfer device is a plastic pipette tip.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the pipette tip includes one or more ribs extending outwardly from an outer surface thereof, and wherein at least one of the ribs contacts ~~[[the]]~~ a surface of the cap during step ~~[[b)]]~~ a).

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the pipette tip includes one or more grooves recessed from an outer surface thereof, and wherein at least one air passageway is formed between at least one of the grooves and ~~[[the]]~~ a surface of the cap during step ~~[[b]]~~ a).

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein, prior to step a), a lubricant is applied to at least a portion of the pipette tip or ~~[[the]]~~ to a surface of the cap ~~[[prior to]]~~ punctured during step a).

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the cap includes one or more radially extending ribs positioned on ~~[[the]]~~ a surface of the cap, and wherein at least one of the ribs contacts the fluid transfer device during step a).

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein ~~[[the surface of]]~~ the cap ~~[[punctured in step b) is]]~~ comprises a molded plastic ~~[[molded in the form of]]~~ having a generally conical inner wall, and wherein the inner wall is punctured by the fluid transfer device during step a).

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the inner wall includes a plurality of radially extending striations.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the cap contains a wick for limiting the release of an aerosol from the vessel during ~~[[the penetrating]]~~ step a).

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the wick is selected from the group consisting of pile fabrics, sponges, foams, felts, sliver knits, and spandex.

32. (Original) The method of claim 30 further comprising penetrating a seal affixed to the cap with the fluid transfer device, wherein the seal maintains the wick within the cap.

33. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the second speed is at least twice the first speed.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the first speed is from about 15 mm/s to about 60 mm/s.